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Welcome to the Southeast

TRANSFORMING CHURCHES, TRANSFORMING LIVES

Southeast Conference UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

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A Word From Tim Downs - July

"On the Road Again?"

Dear Friends,



Takin' It To the Streets!

Conference Minister and Lance Armstrong Look-Alike, **Rev. Dr. Timothy C. Downs**, is currently on a well-deserved sabbatical. He is spending his time catching up on his reading, learning new technologies, and peddling his bicycle - rumor has it, he is up to 28 miles per day! We have no doubt, he is spreading the gospel wherever he goes.

Please join us in prayer that Tim's Sabbath time will be renewing, refreshing, and truly re-creational.

May this summer be a time for all in our churches to remember to spend time in "holy rest."

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Headlines from the United Church of Christ

[Oklahoma City church continues legacy of dedicated member](#)

Stephanie Telleen chose to remember Mayflower Congregational United Church of Christ in her will when she passed away, leaving her half-million dollar estate to the church. Now the Oklahoma City church will use that estate to remember Telleen for her selflessness and generosity by funding two missions close to her heart.

Blessings,

Kathy Clark
Associate Conference Minister
KClark@secucc.org

Gerri Ryons-Hudson
Executive Administrator
ghudson@secucc.org



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News From Our Local Churches - July

■ Thank you for Faithful Service

Community Congregational Church UCC, Montgomery, AL celebrated the Interim Ministry of **Reverend T'Dera Jarman** and his lovely wife, **Cheryl**, during a reception, Sunday, July 25, 2010 immediately following worship. The Community UCC family says, **"Thank you,"** to the Jarmans for their faithful service.

Community has called **Reverend Paul A. Gourdine** to serve as pastor, beginning Sunday, August 1, 2010. Rev. Gourdine received his Master of Divinity from ITC Gammon Seminary in Atlanta, GA.

■ First Congregational UCC, Atlanta, GA has called Reverend Chris Waldron as their Youth Minister.

Ordained in the UCC, Chris brings considerable experience to the position and received unanimous support from the Search Committee. Chris is married to Leah Lyman, who is studying in the M.Div. program at the Candler School of Theology. She will complete a Contextual Education Course by working at First Congregation Church beginning in the fall of 2010.

Chris has also been called by the Southeast Conference Board of Directors to do a new church start, Praxis UCC, in the Atlanta area.

■ Garden of Grace United Church of Christ, Columbia, SC, celebrates its 17th Anniversary

The church, pastored by Reverend Andy Siddon, celebrates its anniversary with an eight day party beginning with an August 21st concert by Houston-based contemporary Christian duo, Jason & deMarco. The two have been featured on the cover of The Advocate, in People magazine, and on TV's Showtime.

■ Wedding Celebration

Church of the Savior, Knoxville, TN will hold a reception/party on July 31, 2010 at 6 pm for their pastor John Gill and Deborah Cliburn who were married on July 3rd.

■ Grandchildren are Wonderful

On Saturday, July 17, 2010, Reverend Leslie Etheredge, Associate Pastor welcomed her first grandchildren, Sasha 13 and Marina 9 from the Ukraine to America. The proud parents are her son Shane and daughter-in-law Brandi.

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THE CENTER FOR PROGRESSIVE RENEWAL

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4/4/14, 2:00 PM

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Lifting Up . . . July

Memorial Service for the Rev. Ed Mehlhaff



We share the news of the death of the Rev. Ed Mehlhaff, who died on early Friday morning, July 16, 2010 after a brief hospitalization. Ed was ordained as a United Church of Christ Pastor in 1954 (ordained 56 years) and served many of those years in judicatory ministry.

*Thou anointest my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow
me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the House of the Lord
forever.*

- Psalm 23:5-6

The Reverend Ed Mehlhaff served as the:

- Associate Conference Minister of the South Central Conference from 1977 to 1987
- Conference Minister of the South Dakota Conference from 1987 to 1995
- Interim Conference Minister of the Southeast Conference from 1995-1996

A Memorial Service for the Rev. Ed Mehlhaff was held Saturday afternoon, July 24, at 2:00 P.M. at Plymouth United Church, 5927 Louetta Road, Spring, TX 77379. A reception followed the service.

Cards or expressions of condolence can be sent to Ed's children: Karla Coleman, Wynn Mehlhaff, Debra Nealey and Drew Mehlhaff through Debra at: Debra Nealey, 139 E. Thorton, Houston, TX 77022.

The family has requested that memorial contributions be sent to Plymouth United Church (at the address listed above) in memory of Ed.

The Conference is grateful for Ed's years of ministry as Interim Conference Minister and gives thanks for his faithfulness and dedication to service and ministry to our Conference. We hold Ed's family in our thoughts and prayers, giving thanks for the many ways he shared his life with others.

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Feature Focus - July



Praying, Learning, and Acting for Peace in the Global Village

"From a very multi-talented pool of applicants, we chose an eager group of fearless adventurers who are ready to experience the world in new ways," notes Rev. Dr. Sarah Kim, coordinator of the TAP Global Theological Education Immersion Program. "I look forward to travelling with them and learning from them as we journey to Thailand."



Under the auspices of the Theology Among the People (TAP) program and through a generous grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Southeast Conference and Lancaster

Theological Seminary are jointly sponsoring an intensive three-week immersion trip to Chiang Mai and Bangkok, Thailand from January 6 - 27, 2011. The goal of the trip is to provide an experiential basis for theological reflection in the areas of cross-cultural immersion, inter-religious and intra-religious dialogue, conflict transformation, and peace-building. The trip is being coordinated in conjunction with the Institute of Religion, Culture, and Peace of Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Together we aim to create a rich immersion experience from which participants can apply their learning to educate and impact their communities as agents of transformation and peace.



Seven people from the Southeast Conference and seven people from Lancaster Theological Seminary have been chosen for this opportunity. "From a very multi-talented pool of applicants, we chose an eager group of fearless adventurers who are ready to experience the world in new ways," notes Rev. Dr. Sarah Kim, coordinator for this project. "I look forward to travelling with them and learning from them as we journey to Thailand." The seven participants from the Southeast Conference include: **Emma Chatmon of Thomasville, GA; Regina Drake of Lithonia, GA; Maxine Ervin of Montgomery, AL; Charmaine Johnson of Stone Mountain, GA; Andrea Mai of Madison, TN; Delores Owens of Crossville, TN; and Jowanna Tillman of Stone Mountain, GA.** Kathy Clark and Sarah Kim will accompany the group along with Professor Greg Carey of Lancaster Theological Seminary.



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Participants who went on the Global Theological Education Immersion trip in 2008 have advised the upcoming participants to "be open" to all they will experience. Participants will be exposed to peace-building efforts in the Thai context that include work with refugees along the Thai-Burmese border as well as among those involved in long-term conflict in the southern region of Thailand. These experiences will serve as case studies to help the group reflect on peace-building and conflict transformation in their own settings. They will also learn about the various expressions of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam in Thailand and be exposed to both scholars and "hand-on" folks involved in interfaith work addressing a variety of social needs, such as child trafficking, prostitution, HIV and AIDS, and other ravages of poverty.



We invite all of you to participate by praying for those who will be going on the trip, our hosts and teachers, and the people of Thailand. If you would like to learn more about the experience, please read the journal entries and peruse the photo album from the 2008 trip participants on our web site. Journal entries and photographs from the 2011 trip will also be posted and participants are expected to bring their experiences back to their churches and communities in sermons, workshops, and projects. As the number of folks from the Southeast Conference participating in our Global Theological Education program increases, we hope to strengthen the ties that bind us to our sisters and brothers around the world. Together, we will experience the blessedness of being peacemakers.



Read More about TAP:

Buddhism in Thailand | A Creative Force

Buddhism is the national religion of Thailand. Theravada or Hinayana Buddhism is the faith of 95 percent of the country's population. At the same time, there is total freedom of religion, and all major religions—including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism, and others—can be found in practice. Christianity makes up less than 1% of the population.



>> [Click here to read more](#)

Bringing Theology into the Midst of the People

Because we are the church together, it is important that we nurture and deepen faith, form and prepare leaders, and grow in our understanding of our mission and ministries as members of the Body of Christ - together. Theology Among the People strives to do that in new and creative ways.



What

**Does It Mean to Bring Theology
Into the Midst of the People?**

>> [Click here to read more](#)

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Conference News - July

- >> **Send Us Your Local Church Information for the August Leader's Link.**
[Gerri Ryons-Hudson](#) is waiting to receive all your latest in "celebrations, lifting-up, and general news." Send us your church news today! Gerri will be collecting all submissions while Rev. Tim Downs is on sabbatical.
- **The next SEC Board of Directors meeting** is scheduled for September 10-11th in Atlanta, GA.
- Update on the **SEC Conference Campaign** from Debbie Spearman.
>>[Click Here to Review the July Update](#)
- **Global Missions trip to Zambia and South Africa**
Associate Conference Minister Kathy Clark will be on a Global Missions trip to Zambia and South Africa, August 29 - September 9, which includes a visit to the Theological Education by Extension Zambia (TEEZ) program, one of the predecessor programs to our own Theology Among the People, begun by Dr. Richard Sales, founder of TAP.
- **Retreat for TAP Thailand Trip Participants**
A Pre-trip Retreat for the TAP Global Theological Education group heading to Thailand in January will be held September 24 - 26. This retreat will be held in conjunction with fellow travelers from Lancaster Theological Seminary in Akron, Pennsylvania.



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Celebrations - July

Reverend Jerry Gladson, Senior Minister Emeritus, First Christian Church (DOC) and an ordained minister in the Georgia-South Carolina Association has written a new book. **The Strangest Books in the Bible: Preaching from the Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Ester**, will be released in both hard and soft cover by Xlibris Press in August. Especially designed for clergy, this book introduces these five books, known as the Megilloth in the Jewish tradition, offers sermon "handles" for preaching on them based on the Revised Common Lectionary, and features the text of a sermon on each book. The book may be obtained through Amazon.com.

Dr. Anil Henry and Teresa Henry, Commissioned Minister's in the Alabama-Tennessee Association have returned from Mungeli, India, where they served as missionaries for Global Ministries. Anil and Teresa are members of Brookmeade Congregational Church UCC in Nashville, TN. They will be based out of the Mid-America region in Jefferson City, MO.

Anil serves the Synodical Board of Health Services of the Church of India. He worked as the medical director of the Christian Hospital in Mungeli. Teresa also serves the Synodical Board and worked as an anesthesiologist at the Christian Hospital.

Anil was recently at Sandy Springs Christian Church (DOC) for the opening night of the documentary film made on their work in Mungeli. He is in the Atlanta area until the end of August and would be happy to visit groups or churches to share an update of their mission work.

Anil can be contacted at anilhenry@gmail.com.

Reverend Heidi Schuler, Pilgrimage UCC, Marietta, GA, attended the Share 2010 Collegiate Conference at Texas Christian University in Ft. Worth, TX, the last week of June. The week-long event was sponsored by the UCC and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and hosted about 60 campus ministers and students from all over the country. She, along with two young adults from Pilgrimage, made lots of new friends and colleagues and came away with a bounty of information about ministering to young adults in our congregations, as well as on our college campuses. Heidi is working with the Center for Progressive Renewal to develop a UCC campus ministry presence at Kennesaw State University in collaboration with her work at Pilgrimage UCC.

Lillian Hallstrand Strahine was ordained this past Sunday, July 25, in a wonderful service held at Benton Chapel on the Vanderbilt University campus in Nashville, TN.

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Buddhism in Thailand

Buddhism in Thailand | [A Creative Force](#)

Buddhism is the national religion of Thailand.

Theravada or Hinayana Buddhism is the faith of 95 percent of the country's population. At the same time, there is total freedom of religion, and all major religions—including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism, and others—can be found in practice. Christianity makes up less than 1% of the population.



Buddhism is the foundation of Thai culture and the creative force behind literature, fine arts, architecture, music, and drama. According to the national Constitution, the monarch must be Buddhist. For Thai people, the three sacred national institutions are: the King, the Thai nation, and Buddhism.

There are three major categories to understanding Thai Buddhism

Buddhism as the source of:

- 1) Spirituality
- 2) Philosophy
- 3) Morality

Spirituality

The highest spiritual goal of Buddhism is to attain enlightenment. Enlightenment is characterized by four sublime qualities—1) ultimate insight, 2) absolute purity of mind, 3) absolute peace of mind, and 4) great compassion.

Philosophy

Buddhist philosophy refers to the Four Noble Truths. These truths present that 1) life is suffering, 2) suffering is caused by desire or attachment, 3) suffering can be ended with the attainment of enlightenment, and 4) the ways to end suffering consists of the eight noble paths including right views, right determination, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation.

Morality

The foundation of Buddhist morality is the Law of Karma. Karma refers to the law of cause and effect that operates in the life process of individuals. It is about one's

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conduct and its consequences in personal happiness or unhappiness and in social relationships. The Law of Karma consists of four factors—1) mental impulse or drive, 2) volition or intention, 3) action itself (with use of karmic energy), 4) the karmic result. An action can be classified as good, evil, or neutral. The "goodness" of each of the four factors determines a good karmic result. Karma is an inherent aspect of all human experience, but it can be neutralized and rendered impotent by the power of Enlightenment.

Reference: *Buddhism and Thai People* by Saeng Chandra-ngarm (1999)

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